

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 02388 082148Z

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY KUBISCH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BR

SUBJECT: NEW GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CUBA

REF: STATE 067859

1. BASED ON OUR APPRECIATION OF THE GENERAL THRUST OF FOREIGN POLICY IN THE NEW GEISEL ADMINISTRATION AND ON SOME RECENT SPECIFIC GUARDED REFERENCES TO CUBA BY WELL-PLACED OFFICIALS IN CONVERSATIONS (INDEPENDENT OF YOUR QUERY) WITH ME AND OTHERS, I ESTIMATE THAT THE CURRENT GOB POSITION ON THE CUBAN QUESTION CAN BE OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

A. IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AND A CAREFUL HEAD-COUNT SHOULD BE TAKEN TO SEE WHETHER THERE ARE ENOUGH VOTES TO POSTPONE THE ISSUE.

B. THE GOB ESTIMATES THAT IN ANY CASE THE STATUS QUO CANNOT BE MAINTAINED MUCH LONGER.

C. THE GOB DOES NOT INTEND TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVE ON THE CUBAN QUESTION.

D. IN ANY VOTE IN THE OAS ON A PROPOSAL TO REMOVE SANCTIONS, BRAZIL WILL VOTE AGAINST (SEE, HOWEVER, PARA G BELOW).

E. BRAZIL WILL NOT, HOWEVER--AND THIS IS THE KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT I JUDGE TO BE THE ATTITUDE OF

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRASIL 02388 082148Z

THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND THAT OF THE MEDICI GOVERNMENT--

MAKE A FEDERAL CASE OUT OF THE MATTER, THAT IS, IT WILL NOT PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS IN OPPOSITION. I CONSIDER IT REASONABLE TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM THIS THAT THE GOB WILL NOT PUT GREAT PRESSURE ON US TO STAND FIRM. THEY WOULD, HOWEVER, EXPECT US TO VOTE AGAINST THE RELAXATION OF SANCTIONS, AND THEY WOULD TAKE AMISS ANY ACTIONS BY US THAT WOULD BE CONSTRUED AS ENCOURAGING OTHERS TO VOTE FOR RELAXATION.

F. IN THE SAME VEIN, THE GOB NOW WOULD NOT BE SO STRIDENT IN ITS OPPOSITION TO A WAIVER FOR US SUBSIDIARIES IN ARGENTINA BUT WOULD EXPECT THAT THE WAIVER ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A DECLARATION THAT WE HAVE NOT CHANGED OUR FUNDAMENTAL POSITION. FOR US TO FAIL TO DO THIS WOULD BE CONSTRUED AS ENCOURAGING RELAXATION.

G. BRAZIL "WILL NOT BE THE LAST IN LINE" (A QUOTE FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES). I INTERPRET THIS TO MEAN, CLEARLY, THAT BRAZIL WOULD NOT CAST A TOTALLY ISOLATED NEGATIVE VOTE ON SANCTIONS. IT CAN ALSO MEAN THAT BRAZIL WOULD NOT BE THE LAST TO RE-ESTABLISH SOME KIND OF RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA. THAT STEP WOULD ENTAIL, HOWEVER, THE MOST CAREFUL PREPARATION OF THE GROUND BY THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE MILITARY AND SECURITY ELEMENTS.

2. THERE ARE TWO OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

A. OUR LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT TO CONSULT BRAZIL HONESTLY AND FULLY ON CUBA AND THE EVOLUTION OF OUR POSITION--INCLUDING THE ARGENTINE SUBSIDIARIES QUESTION--MUST BE HONORED. THE JUDGMENT ABOUT THE READINESS OF THE GOB TO FOREGO JUMPING AND SCREAMING ABOUT AN EVOLUTION OF OUR POLICY WITH RESPECT TO CUBA DOES NOT RPT NOT MEAN THAT THERE WOULD BE EASY ACCEPTANCE OF A US SHIFT WITHOUT ADVANCE CONSULTATION. SUCH USG ACTION WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT IN HELPING THE GOB FOLLOW THE MORE RELAXED COURSE THEY SEEM PREPARED TO TAKE. (THIS LAST COMMENT IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION OF AN EVOLUTION OF OUR OWN POLICY TOWARD A MORE FLEXIBLE POSTURE. IF THE DECISION WERE TO HOLD THE PRESENT LINE, ADVANCE CONSULTATION WOULD BE EVEN MORE NECESSARY SINCE WE WOULD WANT TO ASSURE THAT THE MORE RELAXED BRAZILIAN STANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRASIL 02388 082148Z

NOT BE EXPRESSED IN A WAY THAT WOULD WEAKEN THE STAND-FAST POSITION.)

B. AS IT BECOMES LESS UP-TIGHT, THE GOB IS GOING TO HAVE TO DEAL CAREFULLY WITH THE PINOCHET REGIME IM CHILE. AS YOU KNOW, THE GOB ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO ITS CLOSE--AND IN SOME RESPECTS TUTELARY--RELATIONS WITH THE CURRENT GOC. A BRAZILIAN "SOFTNESS" ON CUBA--EVEN IF HIGHLY RELATIVE--WOULD NOT, IT SEEMS TO ME, BE

PALATABLE TO THE GOC WHICH APPEARS TO BE EMOTIONAL ON
THE ISSUE. IN AN IRONIC SENSE, THE GOC HAS BECOME FOR
THE GOB WHAT THE GOB HAS BEEN FOR US.
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